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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/520,115	01/03/2005	Olivier Favoret	0518-1080-1	9534
<div>465 7590 03/24/2010</div> <div>YOUNG & THOMPSON 209 Madison Street Suite 500 Alexandria, VA 22314</div>				
EXAMINER				
VETTER, DANIEL				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3628				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
03/24/2010		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

DocketingDept@young-thompson.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/520,115

Applicant(s)

FAVOREL ET AL.

Examiner

DANIEL VETTER

Art Unit

3628

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 March 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 21-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 21-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/C)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Claims

1. Claims 21-29 were previously pending. Claim 21 was amended in the reply filed March 1, 2010. Claims 21-29 are currently pending.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on March 1, 2010 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to the rejections under § 103(a) have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 21, 22, and 24-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boies, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 2002/0082878 (Reference A of the PTO-892 part of paper no. 20080513) in view of Nakano, et al., U.S. Pat. Pub. 2002/0184082 (Reference A of the attached PTO-892) and Walker, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,112,185 (Reference B of the PTO-892 part of paper no. 20080513).

6. As per claim 21, Boies teaches a method for the allocation of seats to customers, usable with a computerized reservation system, comprising: assignment, in a database, to each customer, of data relative to placement criteria (§ 0038); determination of a satisfaction value of the customers for each seat as a function of agreement with the placement criteria (§ 0046), assignment, in a database, to each customer, of a priority level (§ 0038), assignment of seats to all the customers by allocation with an allocation server, to each customer, of the available seat having the maximum satisfaction value (§ 0046).

Boies does not teach that the determination is by a processor, assignment to each placement criterion, of an attribute weight, and that the satisfaction value is a particular numerical amount resulting from a specific mathematical operation; which are taught by Nakano (§§ 0010, 22, 27, 52-53; Figs. 4B, 4D). It would have been *prima facie* obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate the above features for the same reason they are useful in Nakano; namely, to facilitate a customer satisfaction analysis. Additionally, this is merely a combination of old and already-known elements. In the combination each element performs the same function as it did separately, and one skilled in the art would have recognized that the combination could be implemented through routine engineering and that the results of the combination were predictable. Moreover, making a determination by a processor rather than a person is merely the automation of an already-known step. Broadly providing an automatic means to accomplish a known activity is not sufficient to distinguish a claimed invention over the prior art. *In re Venner*, 262 F.2d 91, 95, 120 USPQ 193, 194 (CCPA 1958). In this case, performing the determination automatically using a processor would have been an obvious expedient that could have been obtained through routine engineering producing predictable results. Examiner notes that while the embodiment set forth as an example in Nakano does not specifically deal with a seat for travel, one skilled in the art would have recognized that the weighting preferences methodology and analysis used in Nakano are easily extensible for other products and services that have rankable attributes such as an airline seat.

Boies does not explicitly teach that the allocation is by decreasing order of level of priority, which is taught by Walker (col. 6, lines 6-11). It would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate the above teachings of Walker because this is merely a combination of old and already-known elements in the travel reservations industry. In the combination each element performs the same function as it did separately, and one skilled in the art would have recognized that the combination could be implemented through routine engineering and that the results of the combination were predictable.

7. As per claim 22, Boies in view of Maritzen and Walker teaches the method of claim 21 as described above. Boies further teaches the fact that the steps of allocation are repeated upon each new reservation or cancellation of a seat (§ 0028).
8. As per claim 24, Boies in view of Maritzen and Walker teaches the method of claim 21 as described above. Boies further teaches there is assigned to each seat at least one attribute indicating inclusion in group of available seats, for the definition of the seats available for allocation (§ 0021).
9. As per claim 25, Boies in view of Maritzen and Walker teaches method of claim 24 as described above. Boies further teaches that there is excluded from the group of available seats, seats whose reservation is confirmed by the customer (§ 0009).
10. As per claim 26, Boies in view of Maritzen and Walker teaches method of claim 25 as described above. Boies further teaches for customers whose seat has a confirmed reservation, there is carried out a search procedure for a possible better seat by the steps of allocation (§ 0046).
11. As per claim 27, Boies in view of Maritzen and Walker teaches method of claim 21 as described above. Boies further teaches the placement criteria comprise data as to zone or location of the seats desired by the customer (§ 0042).
12. As per claim 28, Boies in view of Maritzen and Walker teaches method of claim 21 as described above. Boies further teaches the placement criteria comprise an adjacency criterion of the customer to at least one other customer (§ 0039).

13. As per claim 29, Boies in view of Maritzen and Walker teaches method of claim 21 as described above. Boies further teaches there is assigned to each placement criterion an attribute defining it either as mandatory or as preferred (¶¶ 0041-43).

14. Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boies, et al. in view of Maritzen, et al. and Walker, et al. as applied to claim 21 above, further in view of Official Notice considered admitted prior art.

15. As per claim 23, Boies in view of Walker teaches the program of claim 11 and method of claim 21 as described above. Boies in view of Walker does not teach upon all the available seats being assigned, placing remaining customers on a waiting list. Official Notice was previously taken and not challenged that waiting lists are old and well-known in the reservations art. This finding is considered admitted prior art. It would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate the above finding of Official Notice, for example, so that a list of potential passengers can be easily accessed in the event that another seat becomes available. Moreover, this is merely a combination of old and already-known elements. In the combination each element performs the same function as it did separately, and one skilled in the art would have recognized that the combination could be implemented through routine engineering and that the results of the combination were predictable.

Conclusion

16. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL VETTER whose telephone number is (571)270-1366. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday 8:00am - 6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John W. Hayes can be reached on (571)272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/DPV/

/JOHN W HAYES/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3628